

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Scientific and General

CALIFORNIA MEDICINE: IN BRIEF REVIEW*

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

WILLIAM R. MOLONY, SR., M. D.

Los Angeles

IT is the privilege of the President of this Association to prepare and read an address at the annual meetings; each in turn voicing impressions gained from a busy life of practice; and all of these subjects have been worth while. Many have been concerned with Association affairs and suggested improvements; others have discussed new laws and economic changes; while some have delved into ancient history and the classics, and still others have reviewed medical accomplishments.

I am neither a prophet nor a philosopher, not very good at regulating the affairs of others, find no fault with Association affairs (which, by the way, I think are in excellent shape), and I cannot forecast the future, which to me is a closed book and an uncharted course. To evaluate our accomplishments and to appreciate our benefits we should know something of our background. It is not my purpose to write a history of medicine in California; but rather to move rapidly along, giving here and there enough of the historical events which have marked the cavalcade of medicine in California.

I have an abiding affection and devotion to medicine—which includes that group of men and women who, throughout the ages, have unselfishly given of themselves to the cause of healing, whose every thought and act have been for the good and well-being of the patient; the safeguarding of their fellows from the ravages of pestilence and disease. These are they who zealously safeguarded the honor and integrity of their sacred calling.

A young doctor upon his graduation was admonished in this wise: "Whether or not your career will be great or ordinary, depends very much upon yourself. In practice you will be among human beings and will have a great opportunity for service. The rewards you will receive will not be monetary, but spiritual. The monument you will have in that far distant day when you leave this world will not be of stone. It will be something, rather, in the memory of the many you have served. They will remember you for what you did, and be grateful.

"The reason, of course, is because of the peculiar and extraordinary relation that exists between the physician and his patient. You will see people as others rarely see them; when they are ill and despairing, and need help desperately; you

will not only be the healer of bodies but will be the healer of souls.

"You will find the psychic side of your ministration equal to the physical, often more so. It can be said with Robert Louis Stevenson that no calling in the world has a higher opportunity for human service than that of the true physician. There are all kinds of doctors; some are mediocre, but when you meet a good one, a great humanist as well as a great physician, how his light does shine."

I was born in Los Angeles in 1879, at which time this city was a pueblo of less than 10,000 population. Here it was that I received my academic and medical education.

The cavalcade of medicine in California, beginning with the Mission period, is an epic of achievement. The romance and tradition of this Golden State, and my association with the early pioneers who built so well, imbued in me the spirit of the West and my love of California. We may well be proud of the accomplishments of medicine, and to that group of courageous men who shaped our destiny, we are grateful.

As the pages of medicine unfolded and I was launched upon the, (to me) uncharted sea of practice, the activity and glamour of medicine centered in San Francisco. The rapid growth of the state, with its improved travel facilities, served to widen this influence, and the benefits of medicine, once confined to the larger cities, were made available to the smaller communities.

BEGINNINGS OF MEDICINE IN CALIFORNIA

The story of the beginning and progress of medicine in California, therefore, is fascinating and thrilling. Its unfolding is replete with the stories of the courageous men and women who never faltered; who, in the traditions of the true physician, cared for the sick and needy, promoted better health and educated their successors. Then, as now, the Doctor, the Church, and the State joined hands for the relief of suffering, the saving of souls and the good of humanity. With the exception of a temporary visit and a sporadic attempt on the part of the Spanish, Portuguese, English, and Russian sailing masters, the civilization and development of California began with the Franciscan Missionaries who accompanied the first Spanish expedition to San Diego.

The zeal of Father Junipero Serra for the salvation of souls led him and his associates to endure great hardships and to persevere until success crowned their mission.

With Serra on his journey from San Diego to Monterey, the site of the second mission, was Dr. Pedro Prat, the first surgeon in California. The Franciscan Fathers year by year established a chain of mission, 21 in all, extending throughout the length of California, from San Diego on the South to Sonoma on the North. They brought to the Indians a practical application of the trades, arts, and sciences.

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These missions were spaced along the El Camino Real about a day's journey from each other, and were designed for the education and the spiritual care of the Indians. The saintly Serra, when he began his California mission, was 58 years old; and he traveled on foot, time and time again, from Mission to Mission during the years of his administration.

Beginning with Dr. Pedro Prat in 1769, and ending with the Spanish régime in 1824, nine Doctors of Medicine served as Surgeon General at Monterey. Outside of an occasional call from a surgeon with a visiting warship, the only medical men in the province were these doctors.

The Padres possessed considerable medical knowledge, gave the necessary medical and nursing care to their people, were capable of doing minor surgery and, if need be, performed more serious and complicated operations.

The Mexican period was ushered in by the revolution of 1822. Up to this time, the trend of civilization had been upward. Mexico declared herself independent of Spain, and then followed a period of decadence; the Missions were seized, secularized and desecrated.

The Spanish régime of more than 50 years was marked by a dearth of doctors, drugs, and diseases. The Surgeon General of the province, with the help of the missionary Fathers and a partera (mid-wife), was able to care for the people in this vast domain.

POST-SPANISH ERA

With the coming of the "Gringo," an array of "winged and wan" diseases followed: epidemics of small-pox, measles, scarlet fever and cholera, with an increase in tuberculosis and syphilis.

The pueblos and ranchos were widely scattered, so that it was not possible for one surgeon to care for all. Gradually, the practice of hospital stewards, drug clerks, phlebotomists, barbers, scouts and trappers assumed the rôle of the "Doctor" in their respective communities.

Even in the American period there were many persons of this type, and some occupied such positions of prominence that considerable difficulty was encountered when the first medical society insisted that its members be graduate M.D.'s.

Some charlatans flourished. Meeks of Monterey, Sparks of Santa Barbara, and William Money of Los Angeles were shining examples. A scattering of men of education with a background in medicine contributed not a little to the needs of their communities, such as "Dr." Richard Den, and "Dr." De La Cuesta of Santa Barbara, and John Marsh.

In 1828 smallpox was epidemic. One James Pattie, not an M.D., arrived in San Diego bringing with him a supply of vaccine. He traveled as far north as Bodega, vaccinating in all, so it is said, more than 22,000 persons. Thus began the practice of preventive medicine and public health in California.

In the north, although Mission Dolores and the Presidio date from 1776, the medical history of the San Francisco peninsula did not begin until about 1844-1845. In this year came Dr. John Townsend who is said to have rocked the cradle of medicine in San Francisco.

The spirit of adventure, the lure of the West and the discovery of gold were the magnets that drew a vast multitude to California. In this rush came the men who were to make medical history.

At the close of the Mexican period there were but few doctors with a sound medical training. Most of the pueblos and villages were dependent on men with but a smattering of medical knowledge. Cephas L. Bard of Ventura, a noted pioneer physician relates, that everyone was a self-constituted physician, according to the old provincial adage:—

"De medico, poeta y loco
Todos tenemos in poco."

Or freely translated, "Of medicine, poetry and insanity we all possess a little."

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

San Francisco was just emerging from the village of Yerba Buena when the gold excitement began. With others went the doctors to the mines, not to practice, but to seek their fortunes. As the mining craze subsided, the doctors, old and new, returned to their vocations.

Sacramento, at that time, was the center of mining activity and the medical center of the Golden Age. In 1850 more than fifty doctors signed the roster of the Medico-Chirurgical Society.

Out of this motley crowd of physicians attracted to the State during the gold excitement, a goodly number remained; and to these, medicine owes a debt of gratitude. Many in their home communities had been skillful and successful practitioners. Of these pioneer doctors, risking the dangers of the journey, it has been said that only the brave attempted it and only the strong survived. These were superior to their fellows. The great hospitals and medical schools, our medical societies, postgraduate courses and medical journals are all monuments to these pioneer men of medicine.

One such pioneer was Elias S. Cooper, the founder, in 1858, of the Medical Department of the University of the Pacific, which, after a troubled existence was succeeded by the Cooper Medical College, to become in 1908, the School of Medicine of Stanford University.

Another was Hugh H. Toland, founder, in 1864, of the Toland Medical College. He occupied a place in the medical world that has seldom been equaled. He was a sponsor and benefactor to many medical and civic activities. Through his efforts and generosity the Toland Medical College, in 1873, became the Medical School of the University of California.

Henry Gibbon, Sr., inaugurated the first course of medical lectures in California, and was fore-

most in the promotion of medical education. He left a heritage which has shone brilliantly in his descendants. Dr. Beverly Cole, a picturesque and forceful character, served as Dean of the Toland Medical College and the University of California.

Probably the greatest genius of the period was Levi Cooper Lane who, in 1860, joined his uncle Dr. Elias Cooper. He possessed more college degrees than any other doctor in California. He was a master of six languages and a brilliant man of parts. In time he accomplished that in which his uncle had failed—the founding of a successful medical school, teaching hospital and medical library, the latter of which still bears his name.

The impetus given medicine by these unselfish pioneers generated in California a spirit of progress which grew stronger through the years, and wrought accomplishments that compelled the admiration of the medical world.

The southern part of the state, far removed from the excitement and lure of the gold rush, was but sparsely inhabited. Los Angeles, San Diego and Santa Barbara were small pueblos. The great ranchos extending from the Tehachapis to San Diego were the principal assets.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

In 1850 while San Francisco was teeming with a population of 100,000; less than 2,000 resided in Los Angeles. However, it was in this year that the physicians of Los Angeles organized the first medical society in California.

Practice was difficult, travel was by horseback and stage. Development of the great Southwest was very rapid after the coming of the railroads, which brought in a large number of people.

The pioneer physicians were joined by others attracted by adventure, climate, and the spirit of the West. Medical progress was slow, hospital facilities meagre, the only hospital being the Sisters which was the center of medical activity.

In the early eighties, Dr. Joseph P. Widney, in an address to the Medical Society of the State of California (former name of the California Medical Association), concerning medical education, stated that it was important for every practitioner of the healing art to be an educated man, and to be trained in the underlying principles of disease, its causation, its phenomena, and its pathology. This great man envisioned the need for medical education in the South; and in 1885 he founded the College of Medicine which, through the years, has been eminently successful, and has been the stimulus for the continued activity and development of medicine in Southern California. This college has the distinguished honor of having had four of its faculty, and six of its alumni, elected to the presidency of the California Medical Association.

On the faculty were such men as Henry C. Brainerd, pioneer neuropsychiatrist, who succeeded Dr. Widney as Dean; and Dr. Joseph Kurtz, a picturesque character, a great teacher and a pioneer orthopedist.

Granville MacGowan, a genial gentleman of culture, also was a typical genito-urinary specialist of his period, who throughout his busy life exerted a marked influence for the good of medicine and the community.

A dynamic personality and the outstanding specialist in eye, ear, nose, and throat was H. Bert. Ellis. He was a potent force in the State Medical Society and the American Medical Association.

George W. Lasher, noted surgeon and teacher, and his close friend, F. T. Bicknell, exemplified the high standards of honesty and ethics.

The arrival in the nineties of Francis and John R. Haynes, marked the modern concept of surgery and internal medicine. To Stanley Black we owe our modern practice of pathology.

Norman Bridge stimulated interest in the management of tuberculosis, and bequeathed his fortune to further medical education.

The practical and sound conception of public health, now in force, had its origin in the energy and foresight of Dr. L. M. Powers. He pioneered in pure water, pure milk, and effective quarantine.

This narrative would not be complete without a word of tribute to Dr. Walter Lindley—a man devoted to the best in medicine. The "Southern California Practitioner," the California Hospital and the College of Medicine bear witness to his zeal. In addition, through his tremendous influence in the political and business world, medicine gained much.

To Walter Jarvis Barlow the people of Southern California owe a debt of gratitude. Through his love of humanity, his interest in medical education and civic progress, he founded the Barlow Sanitarium, a prototype of all similar institutions that were to follow.

Dr. Barlow was Dean of the Medical School of the University of Southern California, and gave to the medical profession of the great Southwest a medical library which bears his name, and which is now one of the activities supported by the Los Angeles County Medical Association.

To our contemporaries who through the years, in season and out, have unselfishly devoted themselves to medicine and this organization, I wish to express my appreciation. The county societies and the State Association have gained much from their wisdom and experience. Their presence has been, and is a stimulating influence upon those who follow.

It would be a pleasure to call the roll of this distinguished group, but time does not permit. However, there is one to whom I wish to pay special tribute. A man of outstanding accomplishment who, for forty years, has devoted his talents and his energy to the interests of medicine and this Association. It was he who fostered the program for certified milk and the control of tuberculosis. Medical education, postgraduate work, and improved hospital service owe much to his interest and perseverance. His association with civic institutions and projects which were concerned with

medicine has been of great value. By pen and voice he has vigorously fought the enemies of scientific medicine. No man has given more than George H. Kress, my friend and yours.

RÔLE OF THE GENERAL PRACTITIONER

The strength of the profession lies in the general practitioner, the family doctor, if you will, the man who, through prosperity and depression, carried on and ministered to the sick and needy. From his devotion to medicine and education have come the great hospitals, clinics, colleges and medical societies.

Specialization in medicine has made for better service. It has been the means through which great advances have been made in medical practice. The specialist has an important place in our system of practice, and his contribution is of inestimable value. But let us not forget that in the general practitioner lies the strength of American medicine.

It is true that the well-trained, general practitioner can give competent care to 85 per cent of all sick people. These are the men who are available at all hours of the day and night regardless of weather or danger. They are the ones to whom the people turn when sickness comes, and who make the initial diagnosis and render the emergency treatment.

This class of practitioners needs the encouragement of the specialists, the hospitals, and the colleges. Such men must have opportunities for better training and experience. They certainly are not going to be helped very much by a curtailment of their hospital facilities.

It must not be forgotten that modern practice is impossible without hospital service. The doctor is licensed by the state to practice as a physician and surgeon. Hospital facilities are essential to his practice. If the bars are too high, it is possible that corrective legislation may be enacted.

The importance of the place in medicine for the general practitioner was recognized three years ago when the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association created a section on General Practice.

ENVIABLE RECORD OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION

My association on the Board of Medical Examiners for nearly 30 years, in addition to other activities in the field of medicine, has brought me in contact with a multitude of doctors, young and old, of high and low degree, nearly all imbued with that high sense of integrity and loyalty that, from the time of Aesculapius, has characterized the true physician. Like the parasite, which takes all and gives nothing, is that other type of doctor, the despicable type who, false to the traditions, ideals, and ethics of his profession, has turned traitor and commercialized medicine. The frank advertiser is out in the open; he can be seen for what he is; but that hypocrite who, in the guise of respectability and legality, under-

mines his fellow physicians, merits our deepest contempt.

We are proud of the men and women in our profession who have fought the good fight, and who, through the passing years, have adhered to the time-honored principles of the American way of life.

American medicine may well be proud of its exalted position in World War II. For three years before Pearl Harbor, its resources were being mobilized, so, when the call came, it was ready. Members of the California Medical Association have responded to the needs of our Armed Forces to a degree that has depleted our ranks and caused some concern for the care of the civilians at home. This patriotic response was prompt, spontaneous, and without compulsion. No other class or profession has given so much to the success of this war.

THE FUTURE?

The most serious threat to the American way of practicing medicine is the formation of plans, by some of those in government, for changes in the system of medical care. For many years certain groups in this country, following in the footsteps of similar groups in European countries, have labored early and late to fasten their socialistic program of state medicine upon the people of the United States. Surrounded and permeated by a motley group of intellectuals, sociologists, Ph.D.'s., citizen "fixits" and well-meaning but misguided people, the Administration seems bent on the launching of an economic plan, an important part of which is the regulation of medical care according to plan, and the regimentation of the medical profession.

We are not unmindful that changes in our economic scheme of life are bound to follow at the conclusion of this war. From the beginning, American medicine has kept pace with the development of the country, has worked out its own problems, has cleaned its own house, raised the standards of education and practice to a degree beyond that of any other country. Regardless of creed or color, rich and poor alike have received the best of medical care.

Come what will, the men and women who have built American medicine through the last 100 years will not stop, but will continue to improve and progress under the free and competitive system of life.

1930 Wilshire Boulevard.

Knowledge of population trends enables us to foresee a rise in the number of persons requiring hospital care for mental disease because in future larger numbers will reach the ages at which mental disease is most apt to occur.—Frank G. Boudreau.

There are one and one-half times as many deaths from tuberculosis among men as among women. The preponderance of deaths among men is in the older age groups, the reverse is true among women.—Mary Dempsey. National Tuberculosis Association.